

Iraq Weekly Status Report

July 20, 2005

**Bureau of Near Eastern and Asian Affairs
US Department of State**

UNCLASSIFIED



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This report provides weekly updates in the seven key areas identified as pillars of US government policy in Iraq.

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Highlights

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1.0 Transition to Security Self-Reliance

- ï Baghdad's top US commander recently stated that Iraqi Security Forces in and around the city will be ready to assume primary responsibility for security during the upcoming October referendum.

2.0 Support a Free and Democratic Iraq

- ï According to President Talabani's spokesman, the initial draft of the constitution will meet the Transitional Administrative Law deadline for having a draft completed by August 15.

3.0 Provide Essential Services

- ï On July 18, the World Bank announced at the Dead Sea Donors' Meeting in Jordan that up to \$500 million in soft loans will be made available to the Government of Iraq over the next two years to finance development projects in priority sectors.

4.0 Establish Foundation for a Strong Economy

- ï The International Reconstruction Fund Facility (IRFFI) Donor Committee Meeting was held on July 18 & 19 at the Dead Sea in Jordan to advance Iraqi leadership on reconstruction efforts and enhance partnerships between multi-lateral organizations, donor countries & the Iraqi government.



Highlights

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5.0 Promote the Rule of Law

- ï The first criminal case has been filed against Saddam Hussein. The case stems from a 1982 massacre of dozens of Shiite villagers in retaliation for a failed assassination attempt against the former leader. The date for the trial of Saddam and three others will be determined in a few days. If convicted, they could face the death penalty.

6.0 Maintain International Engagement and Support

- ï On July 11, Denmark committed a further \$5.47 million to United Nations Director General's Iraq Trust Fund, bringing its total contribution to \$10 million and making it eligible to becoming a full member of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI) Donor Committee.

7.0 Promote Strategic Communications

- ï The charitable foundation of the Reuters news agency plans to announce this week that it is turning a grass-roots Iraqi news website into that nation's first independent commercial news service. The site, Awsat Al-Iraq, will become a full-fledged newswire, managed and staffed by Iraqi journalists in Baghdad and operated independently of Reuters.



[1.0] Transition to Security Self-Reliance ñ Iraqi Security Forces

Iraqi Security Forces Update:

- ï Baghdadís top US commander recently stated that Iraqi Security Forces in and around the city will be ready to assume primary responsibility for security during the upcoming October referendum.
- ï On July 17 and 18, Iraqi Security Forces, working alongside US forces, seized a large weapons cache, detained eight suspected insurgents, and killed five insurgents during operations in Mosul. The cache consisted of over 1,000 mortar rounds, 25 mortar firing systems, 150 rockets, 450 rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) rounds, and 26 RPG launchers. The cache also included numerous improvised explosive devices, shape charges, and rifles.
- ï An Iraqi Ministry of Oil official announced that oil production will increase during the latter part of the year due to progress in security cooperation between the Ministry of Oil and Commando forces of the Ministry of Interior.



[1.0] Transition to Security Self-Reliance ñ Iraqi Security Forces

Data as of July 18, 2005

Ministry of Interior Forces

COMPONENT	TRAINED & EQUIPPED
POLICE	~ 63,500
HIGHWAY PATROL	
OTHER MOI FORCES	~ 30,300
TOTAL	~ 93,800*

Ministry of Defense Forces

COMPONENT	OPERATIONAL
ARMY	~ 77,700
AIR FORCE	~ 100
NAVY	~ 700
TOTAL	~ 78,500**

Total Trained & Equipped ISF:
~ 172,300

* Ministry of Interior Forces: Unauthorized absences personnel are included in these numbers

** Ministry of Defense Forces: Unauthorized absences personnel are not included in these numbers



[2.0] Support a Free and Democratic Iraq ñ **Developments**

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Constitution Update:

- ï According to President Talabani's spokesman, the initial draft of the constitution will meet the Transitional Administrative Law's (TAL) August 15 deadline for having a draft completed and will be available for the Iraqi public to read on August 15.
- ï On July 19, gunmen shot and killed Sunni Arab member of the Constitution Committee and a Sunni Advisor to the Committee, in Baghdad. A bodyguard also died in the attack.
- ï The Director of Civil Society programs working for USAID's partner providing support to the Constitutional Development process recently met with the Iraqi Minister of Civil Society to discuss cooperation between USAID and his ministry. The discussion centered on coordination of civil society input into the constitution and on conducting joint workshops and sessions on civic dialogue and the capacity building of NGOs.



[2.0] Support a Free and Democratic Iraq ñ **Developments**

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Transitional National Assembly (TNA) Update:

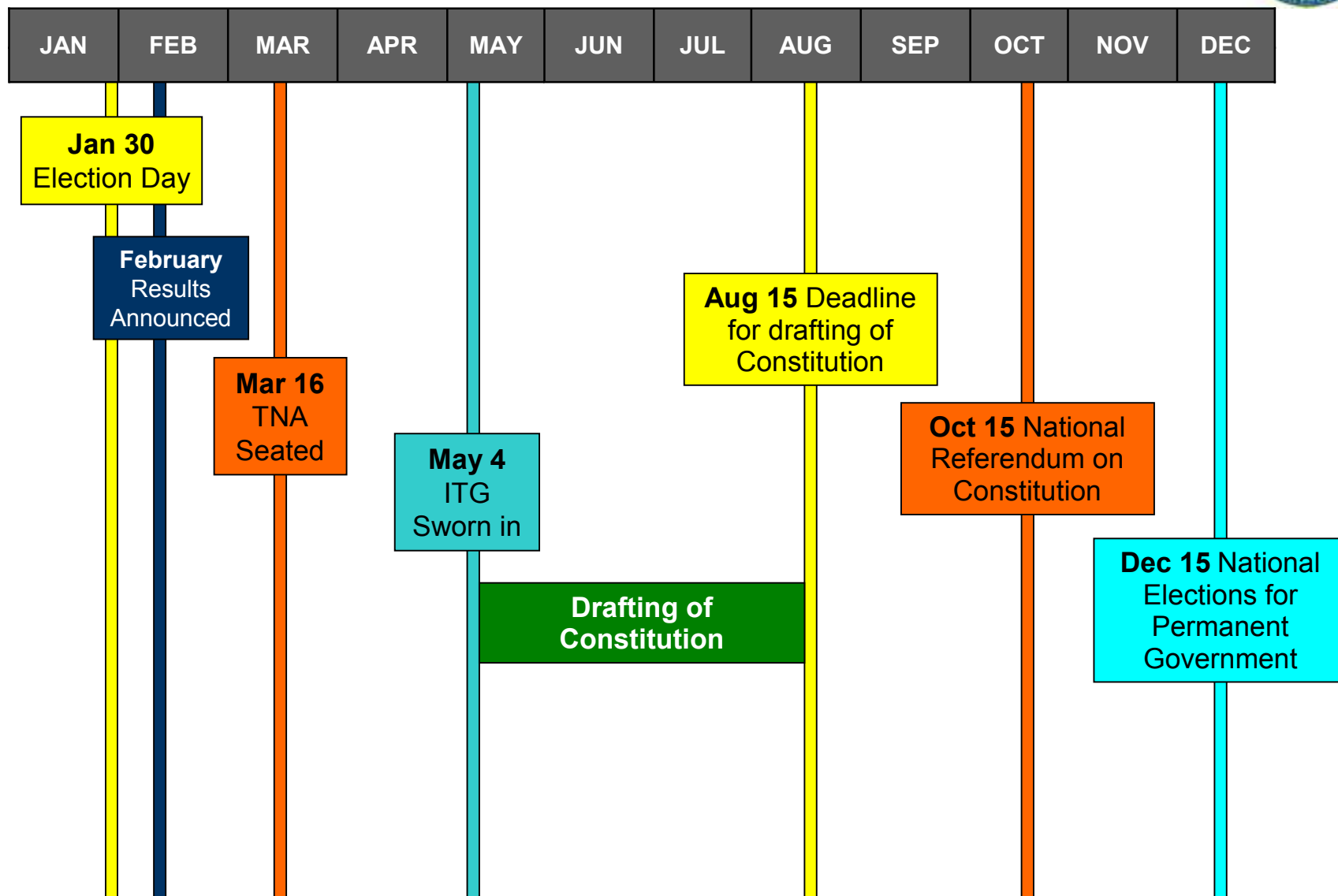
- ï The Human Resources Advisor from USAID's partner worked with TNA staff members to draft job descriptions for each of the TNA staff directors and senior managers. A background paper was written to explain each portion of the proposed structure.

Continuing TNA Responsibilities:

- ñ Serve as Iraq's national legislature until the election of a new government under a permanent constitution.
- ñ According to the Transitional Administrative Law, the TNA is to draft Iraq's new Constitution by August 15, 2005; this will be presented to the Iraqi people for their approval in a national referendum by October 15, 2005.
- ñ If it is approved, an election for a permanent Iraqi government under that new Constitution will occur by the end of 2005.



[2.0] Support a Free and Democratic Iraq ñ Electoral Process Timeline

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[2.0] Support a Free and Democratic Iraq - Iraqi Transitional Government

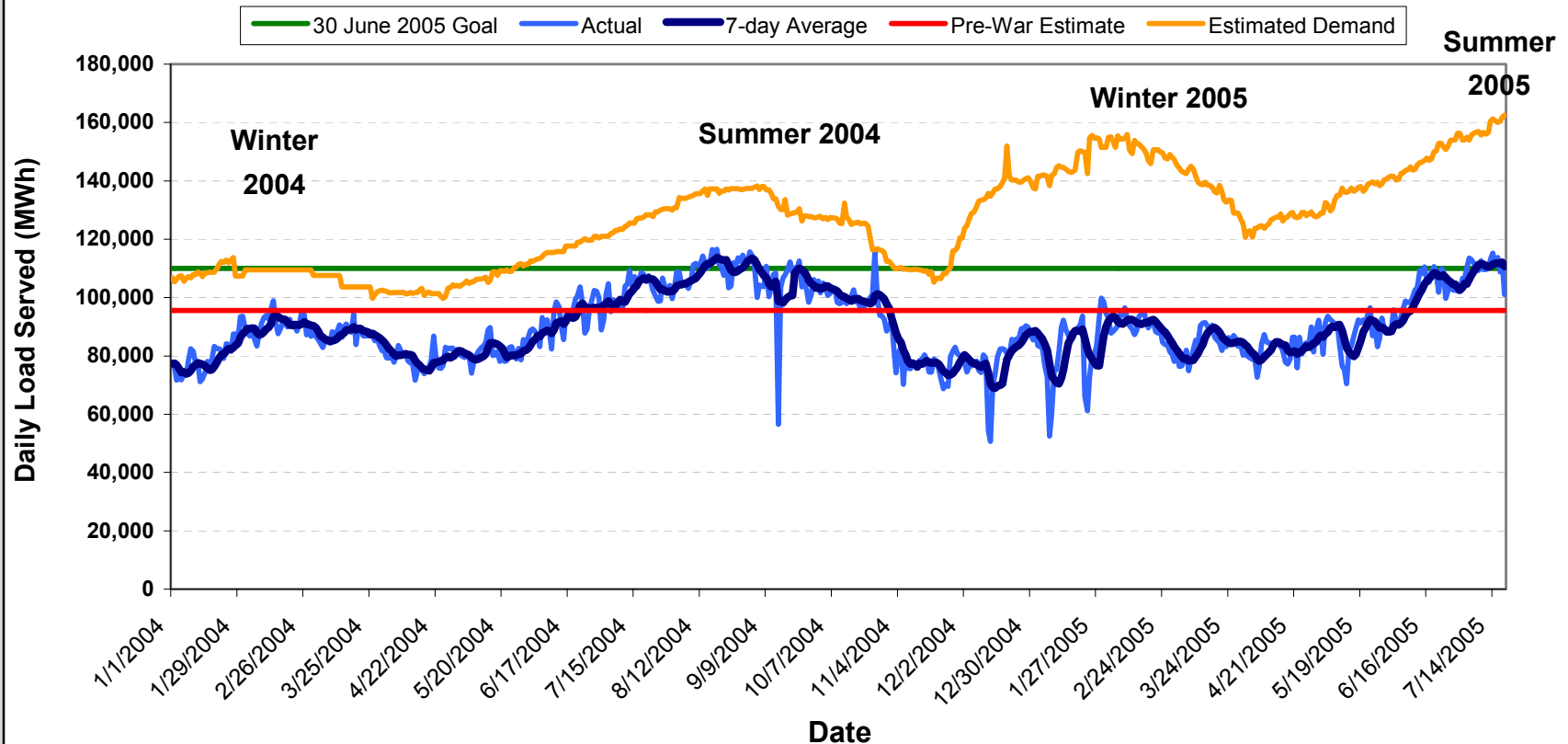
		Deputy President Sheikh Ghazi al-Yawr	President Jalal Talabani	Deputy President ėAdil ėAbd al-Mahdi	
			Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaifari		
Deputy Prime Minister Rawsh Shaways	Deputy Prime Minister ėAbd Mutlak al-Juburi			Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad al-Chalabi	Deputy Prime Minister Vacant
Minister of Agriculture Ali al-Bahadili	Minister of Communications Juwan Fu'ad Ma'sum (F)	Minister of Culture Nuri al-Rawi	Minister of Defense Sa'ibun al-Dulaymi	Minister of Displacement & Migration Suhayla al-Kinani (F)	Minister of Electricity Muhsin Shallash
Minister of Education Abdul Mun'im al-Falah Hasan	Minister of Environment Narmin Uthman (F)	Minister of Finance ėAli ėAllawi	Minister of Foreign Affairs Hoshiyar Zebari	Minister of Health Abd al-Muttalib al-Rubay'i	Minister of Higher Education Sami al-Muzaffar
Minister of Human Rights Acting, Narmin Uthman (F)	Minister of Industry & Minerals Usama al-Najafi	Minister of Interior Bayan Sulagh	Minister of Justice ėAbd al-Husayn Shandal	Minister of Housing & Construction Jasim Ja'far	Minister of Labor & Social Affairs Idris Hadi
Minister of Oil Ibrahim Bahr al-Ulum	Minister of Planning Barham Salih	Minister of Trade ėAbd al-Basit Mawlud	Minister of Science & Technology Basima Butrus (F)	Minister of Municipalities & Public Works Nasreen Berwari (F)	Minister of Transportation Salam al-Maliki
Minister of Water Resources ėAbd al-Latif Rashid	Minister of Youth & Sports Talib Aziz al-Zaini	Minister of State for Civil Society ėAla' abib Kazim	Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Safa' al-Din al-Safi	Minister of State for National Security Affairs ėAbd al-Karim al-ġAnzi	
		Minister of State for Provinces Sa'ib al-Hardan	Minister of State for Tourism and Antiquities Hashim al-Hashimi	Minister of State for Women's Affairs Azhar al-Shaykhli (F)	

(F) = Female



[3.0] Provide Essential Services ñ Electricity Overview

Daily Electricity Supplied and Estimated Demand in Iraq Since January 2004



- i Average daily electricity service held steady in the last week (July 12 - 18) at 112,200 megawatt hours (MWh) (above the Summer 2005 goal), despite a drop in peak generation and continued record demand levels.
- ii Average hours of available power were 14.4 hours in Baghdad and 13.6 nationwide. However, we have received reports that some South-Central governorates (Babil, Najaf and Qadisiyah) are receiving 6-8 hours per day.



[3.0] Provide Essential Services

ñ

Dead Sea Donors Meeting:

- ï On July 18, the World Bank announced at the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI) Donor Committee Meeting in Jordan that up to \$500 million in soft loans will be made available to the Government of Iraq over the next two years to finance development projects in priority sectors.
- ï This lending package is the first to be extended by the World Bank to Iraq since 1973. The new \$500 million lending package will be used to address Iraq's urgent needs by scaling up activities in sectors where operations financed by the Iraq Trust Fund demonstrate progress in implementation, such as improved school facilities, cleaner and reliable supply of water or better healthcare.



[3.0] Provide Essential Services ñ **Water and Sanitation and Telecommunications**

Water and Sanitation:

- ï The Project Contracting Office (PCO) has 83 water treatment projects underway and has completed 61 to date. Under the Accelerated Iraq Reconstruction Program (AIRP), there are a further seven water treatment projects under construction and 43 have been completed. Total water treatment capacity to be added from PCO projects is approximately 1.0 million cubic meters per day.
- ï USAID's Basic Education program is planning to rebuild water and sanitation facilities in 800 schools. In May, work began on 132 schools, bringing the total number of schools under rehabilitation to 355. Facilities in 11 schools in Maysan governorate have already been completed. The Basic Education program is also leading efforts to reconstruct 70 schools throughout the country.
- ï Repairs to the sewage collection system in Kadhamiya, a northern suburb of Baghdad with a population of 1.5 million people will be complete in the fall of 2005.
 - ñ To date, 800 meters of sanitary sewage pipe have been installed, and the refurbishment of 11 pumps will continue into early August.

Telecommunications:

- ï The three major cell phone companies in Iraq (Asiacell, Iraqna, and Atheer) continue to enroll new subscribers at healthy rates. As of July 13, there were 2,804,147 active cellular subscribers in Iraq. Landline telephone subscribers in Iraq have also increased to 997,675. Prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom, there were approximately 833,000 landline subscribers.



[3.0] Provide Essential Services ñ Health Care

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Health Care:

- ï Construction is underway on 142 new primary health care (PHC) facilities across Iraq. Under the AIRP, an additional two PHCs are under construction and eight have been completed.
- ï A total of 5,098 beds will be distributed to hospitals throughout Iraq between June and December. Once PCO delivers the beds to each governorate, the Director General of each governorate is charged with distributing the equipment to local hospitals based on need.
- ï Cases of malaria and cholera in Iraq have decreased dramatically, according to the Iraq Ministry of Health Statistics. In 2002, 1,043 malaria cases were reported, dropping to a total of 307 during 2003 and only 86 cases in 2004. In 2002, the total number of cholera cases reported was 423. This figure fell to 192 during 2003 and only 35 in 2004. USAID supported the Iraqi Ministry of Health's (MOH) efforts to combat these diseases by helping make impregnated bed nets more widely available, supporting the Government of Iraq's and UNICEF's efforts to improve water and sanitation conditions for Iraqi households, assisting the MOH in the expansion of health education efforts and improving diarrheal diseases services.
- ï A USAID contractor conducted a site visit the week of July 11 to the training site in Baghdad, where staff for 150 PHCs, currently under construction throughout Iraq, will be trained to improve their clinical and management skills. Training classes have been completed for 25 physician trainers from six governorates and 17 nurse trainers from three governorates since the end of June. Two more training courses for physicians and nurses are planned for the weeks of July 18 and July 25, respectively.



[3.0] Provide Essential Services ñ Education

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Education:

- ï A total of 3,065 schools have been rehabilitated to date, and a further 776 are undergoing rehabilitation.
- ï PCO has completed 643 schools renovations to date and a further 55 are under construction. Under the AIRP, an additional 24 school renovations have been completed and 16 are underway.
 - ñ 840 schools are scheduled for completion by mid-2005. The Mississippi Consortium for International Development (MCID) continued preparations for a second round of the Community Sustainable Outreach Workshop (CSHOP), which includes the award of mini-grant funds for several outreach projects on public health. MCID works with three Iraqi universities in northern Iraq to build capacity in Public Health and Sanitation, with support from USAID's Higher Education and Development program (HEAD).
 - ñ The CSHOP program is essential in establishing community ties to develop sustainable public health outreach programs that will improve the health status of the general public. Seven faculty members - primarily doctors and engineers - from major universities in northern Iraq as well as two civil society organizations will implement projects to develop new nursing and medical practices around the delivery of public health services.
 - ñ In the past, CSHOP mini-grants have funded such projects as "Soybean as Diet Therapy for Diabetics," "Tuberculosis an Endemic Disease in Dohuk; Prevention and Control," and "Promotion of Exclusive Breast Feeding in Dohuk Governorate."



[4.0] Establish Foundation for a Strong Economy ñ Oil Prices and Job Creation

Data as of July 20, 2005

Oil Update:

ï Crude oil prices in world markets for the week ending July 15 closed with the following prices:

ñ Basra Light at \$51.28/barrel ñ Dated Brent at \$57.31/barrel

ñ Oman/Dubai at \$54.04/barrel ñ WTI Cushing at \$59.09/barrel

Employment Update:

ï The following chart shows the number of Iraqis employed by USG-administered projects

Employing Organization	Number of Iraqis Working Last Week	Number of Iraqis Working This Week	% Change on Week
PCO (Project and Contracting Office)	27,723	29,993	8.2%
USAID	49,340	48,940	-0.8%
AIRP (Accelerated Iraqi Reconstruction Program)	3,791	2,235	-41.0%
MILCON (Military Construction)	433	425	-1.8%
CERP* (Commanders' Emergency Response Program)	23,706	23,706	0.0%
MNSTC-I	24,443	13,367	-45.3%
IRRF NON-CONSTRUCTION	11,357	11,357	0.0%
GRAND TOTAL	140,793	130,023	-7.6%

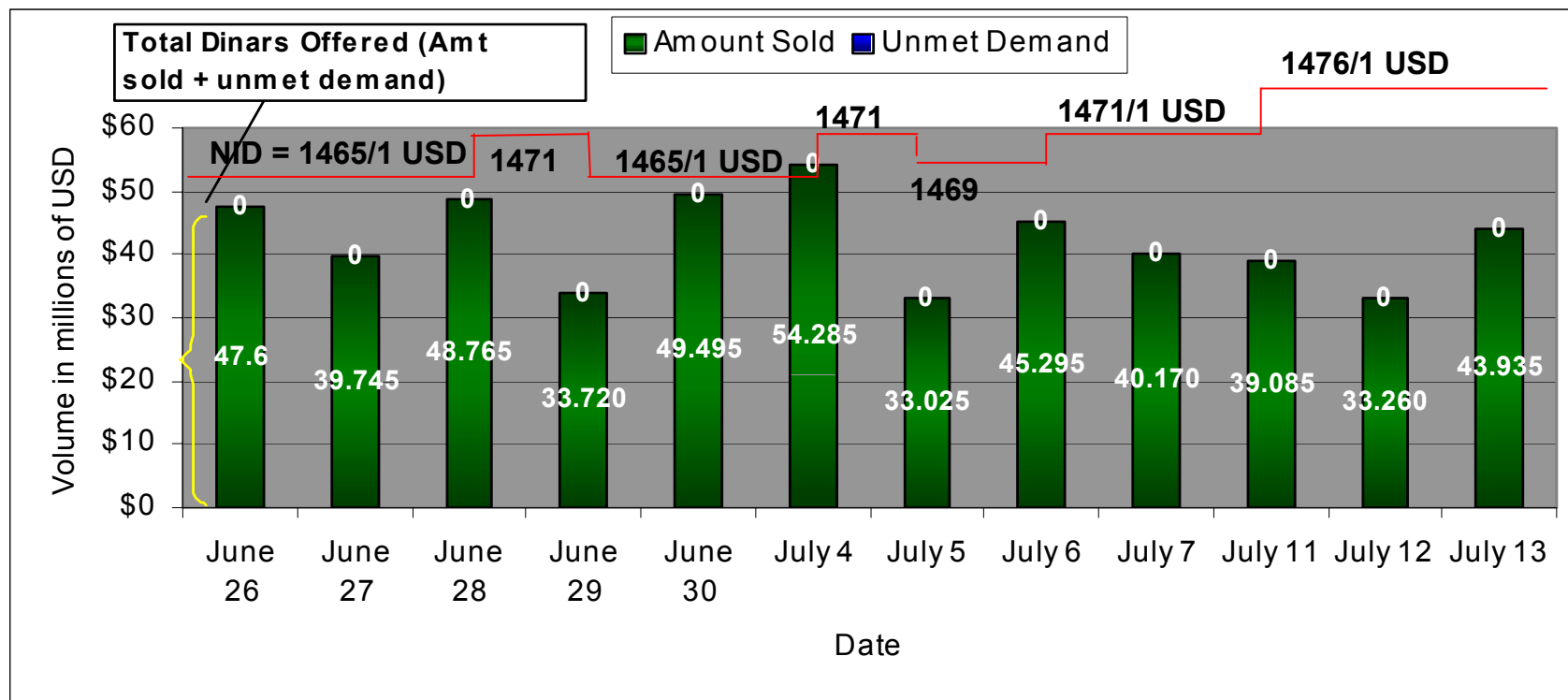
*CERP numbers are from the latest GRD Situation Report



[4.0] Establish Foundation for a Strong Economy - Banking Sector

Iraq Currency Exchange:

- i The settlement price at the New Iraqi Dinar (NID) auction on July 19 was 1,465 dinars per USD. Twenty banks offered and sold a total of NID 61.2 billion (\$41.8 million). The following table shows the purchase volume for NID every auction since June 26.



- i Supply and demand have matched since June 8.



[4.0] Establish Foundation for a Strong Economy

Iraqi Stock Exchange:

- ï On July 18, the Iraqi Stock Exchange (ISX) traded 402,819,231 shares with a total trading volume of NID 4,010,538,327 (\$2,717,167).
 - ñ The banking sector comprised the largest volume of trading. Seven banks traded 307,931,576 shares with a trading volume of 3,480,014,822 (\$2,357,734). *Warkaia Investment Bank* accounted for 78.4 percent of total bank trading volume on July 18.
 - ñ The industry sector comprised the second largest volume of trading. Eighteen companies in this sector traded 58,817,663 shares with a trading volume of NID 355,860,546 (\$241,098).

Iraq Interim Strategy:

- ï The World Bank Board is preparing an interim country strategy for Iraq to be distributed by the end of August and discussed on September 12. The interim strategy focuses on institutional development, private sector development, strengthening the social safety net and public governance.



[4.0] Establish Foundation for a Strong Economy

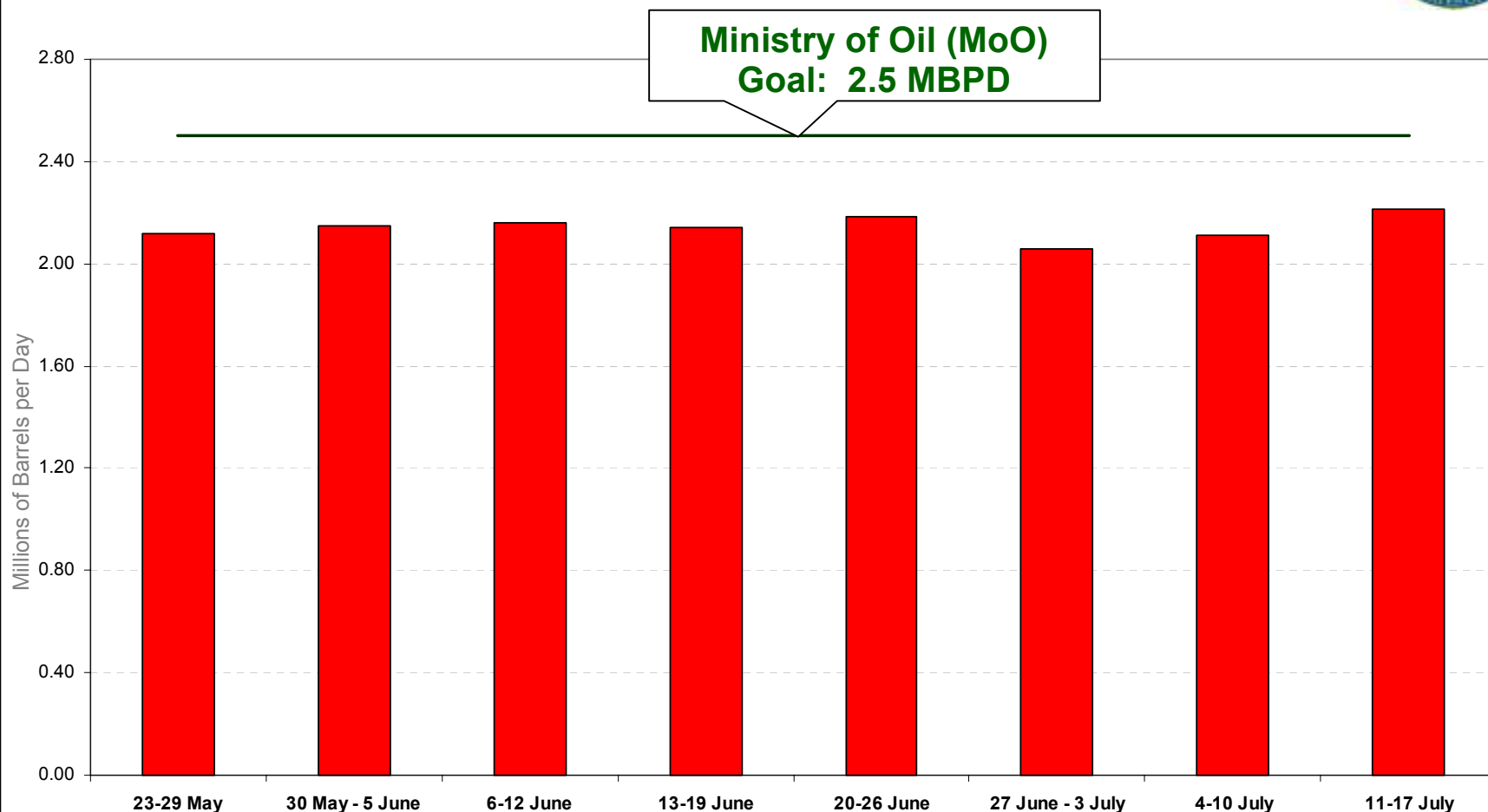
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The International Reconstruction Fund Facility Donor Committee Meeting:

- ï The International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI) Donor Committee Meeting was held on July 18 & 19 in Jordan to advance Iraqi leadership on reconstruction efforts and enhance partnerships between multi-lateral organizations, donor countries & the Iraqi government.
- ï The multilateral discussions, led by Iraqi Planning Minister Barham Salih and IRFFI chair Ambassador Michael Bell from Canada, focused on the progress and lessons learned of the UN and World Bank Iraq trust fund operations. Salih prioritized the need for basic services assistance in electricity, water, health and education.
- ï Sweden and the US announced increases in assistance and loans. Other donors announced a mix of new pledges and disbursements of previous pledges totaling \$197.9 million:
 - ñ Denmark is the newest IRFFI member with its \$5.5 million pledge;
 - ñ Australia pledged \$20 million;
 - ñ Greece pledged \$2.4 million (*\$1.9m-landmines;\$0.5m- constitution support*);
 - ñ European Commission pledged Å150 million;
 - ñ Spain pledged \$20 million;
 - ñ Italy pledged additional \$10m.
- ï WB, UN and Canada plan a multi-donor tour of donor capitals in the fall to encourage new assistance.



[4.0] Establish Foundations for a Strong Economy ñ Crude Oil Production



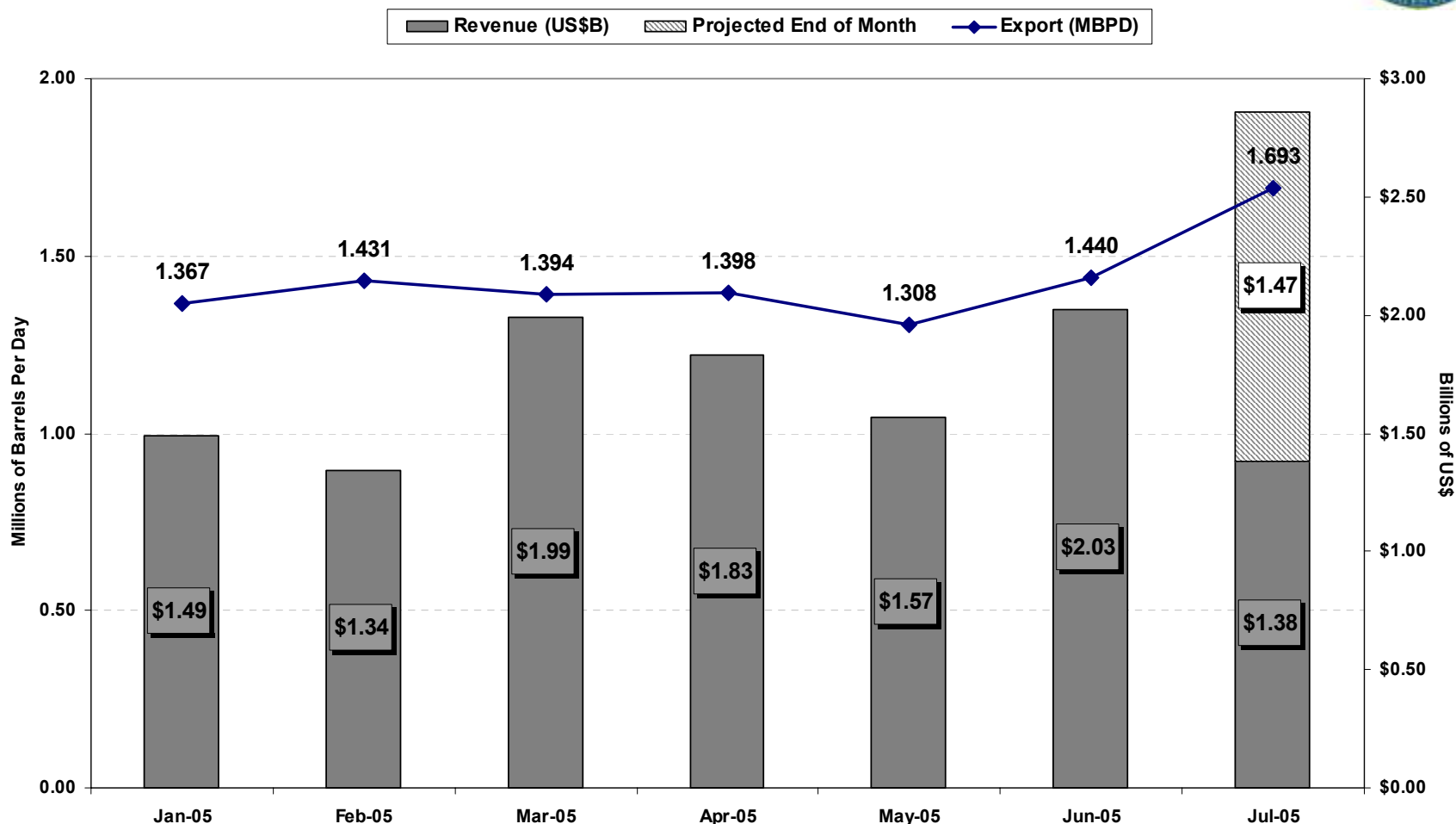
ï Weekly Average (July 11-17) of 2.21 millions of barrels per day (MBPD)

ï Pre-War Peak: 2.5 MBPD in Mar 2003

ï Post-War Peak: 2.67 MBPD



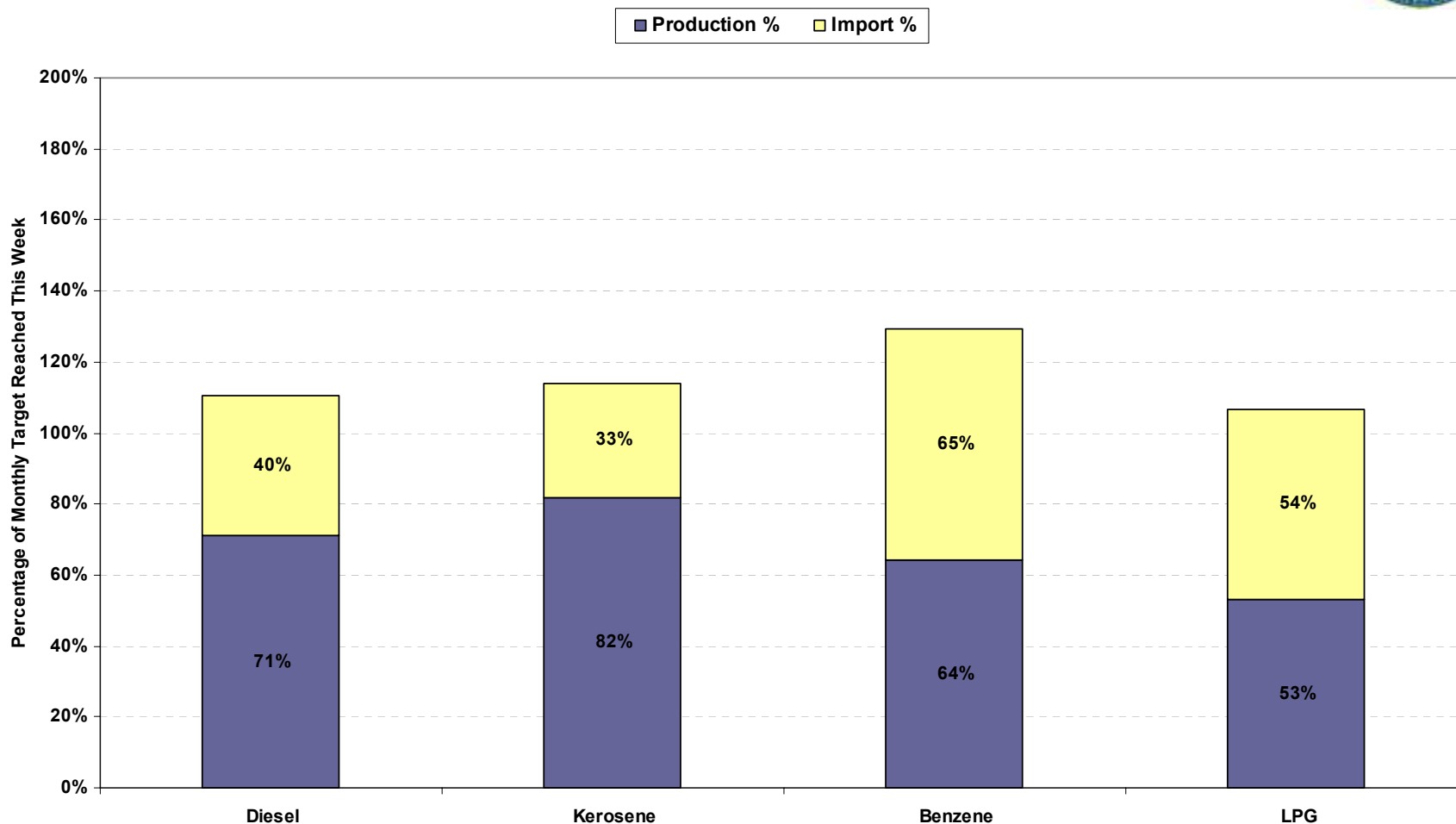
[4.0] Establish Foundations for a Strong Economy ñ Crude Oil Export

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- ï 2003 Revenue: \$5,076.6 M
- ï 2004 Revenue: \$17,012.3 M
- ï 2005 Revenue: \$11,628.0 M (cumulative for 2005)



[4.0] Establish Foundations for a Strong Economy ñ Refined Products

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Note: This chart represents the average percentage of daily target reached for the week of July 11-17

ï Diesel: 19.9 millions of liters (ML) of 18 ML

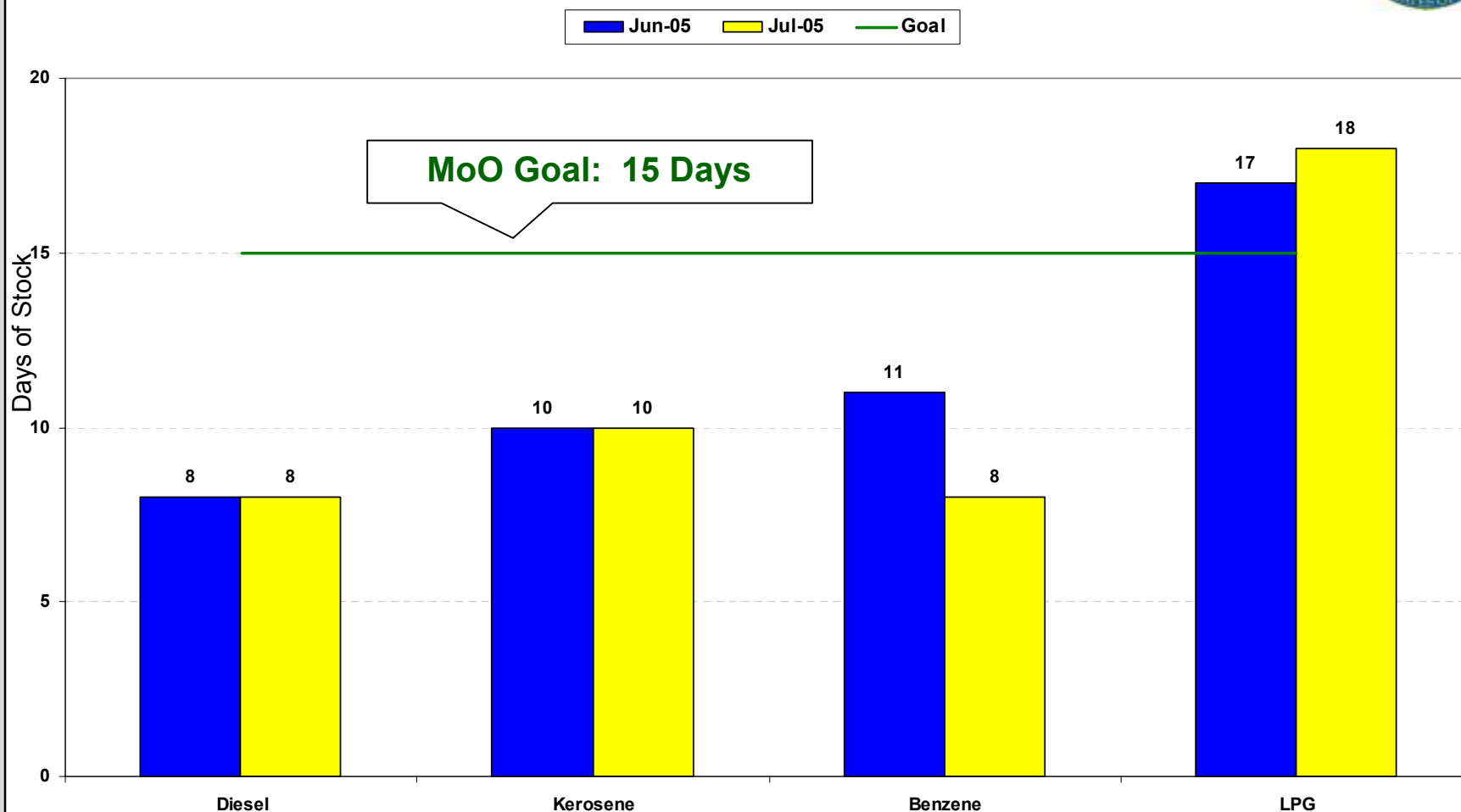
ï Kerosene: 6.2 ML of 5.4 ML

ï Benzene: 23.3 ML of 18 ML

ï LPG: 4,586 tons of 4,300 tons



[4.0] Establish Foundations for a Strong Economy ñ National Stock Levels

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ï The goal is for all refined products to be over 15 days worth of stocks at maximum consumption rates and does not represent seasonal change. The numbers given above are monthly averages.



[4.0] Establish Foundation for a Strong Economy ñFinancials from Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF) 1 and IRRF 2

Data as of July 20, 2005

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\$Millions	Apportioned		Committed			Obligated			Disbursed		
Sector	2207 Report	Apportion	Last Week	Current	Change	Last Week	Current	Change	Last Week	Current	Change
Security and Law Enforcement	5,035.6	5,035.6	4,910.9	4,915.0	4.08	4,496.7	4,514.8	18.10	2,972.9	3,017.4	44.5
Electricity Sector	4,308.2	4,057.6	3,471.0	3,855.6	384.58	2,677.6	2,672.4	(5.17)	1,304.5	1,356.6	52.1
Oil Infrastructure	1,723.0	1,723.0	1,563.6	1,556.3	(7.26)	1,120.8	1,119.8	(1.02)	397.9	399.9	2.0
Justice, Public Safety and Civil Society	1,224.2	1,224.2	1,146.1	1,149.3	3.20	970.3	971.5	1.24	379.0	390.3	11.2
Democracy	905.4	905.3	885.7	885.9	0.18	865.4	865.6	0.22	467.0	468.7	1.8
Education, Refugees, Human Rights, Governance	363.0	363.0	327.3	331.9	4.67	308.4	308.3	(0.11)	115.1	116.0	0.9
Roads, Bridges and Construction	355.2	355.2	330.2	306.1	(24.08)	209.7	208.3	(1.45)	117.1	120.1	3.0
Health Care	786.0	786.0	716.7	752.6	35.96	570.9	553.5	(17.44)	130.0	132.2	2.2
Transportation and Communications	509.0	508.5	480.2	481.8	1.60	382.6	383.7	1.06	118.6	120.1	1.5
Water Resources and Sanitation	2,156.7	1,829.2	1,780.7	1,784.0	3.32	1,397.7	1,408.7	10.98	235.4	241.9	6.6
Private Sector Development	860.3	840.3	835.5	835.5	0.02	817.6	817.7	0.11	475.4	478.8	3.4
Admin Expense (USAID, STATE)	213.0	213.0	213.0	213.0	0.00	213.0	213.0	0.00	213.0	213.0	0.0
TOTAL	18,439	17,840.9	16,660.7	17,067.0	406.29	14,030.6	14,037.2	6.53	6,925.8	7,054.9	129.2
IRRF 2 Construction		10,409.9	9,558.7	9,954.8	396.15	7,577.4	7,571.9	(5.52)	3,082.5	3,163.7	81.2
IRRF 2 Non-Construction		6,525.7	6,216.3	6,226.3	9.95	5,587.8	5,599.7	11.84	3,376.3	3,422.5	46.2
IRRF 2 Democracy		905.3	885.7	885.9	0.18	865.4	865.6	0.22	467.0	468.7	1.8
IRRF 1 Subtotal	2,473.3	2,473.3	2,473.3	2,473.3	0.00	2,473.3	2,473.3	0.00	2,406.6	2,406.6	0.0
Grand Total IRRF 1 & 2	20,912.8	20,314.2	19,134.0	19,540.3	406.29	16,503.9	16,510.5	6.53	9,332.4	9,461.5	129.2



[5.0] Promoting the Rule of Law ñ Iraqi Judicial System

Iraqi Ministry of Justice Holds Roundtable Discussion on Justice Sector Reform:

- i The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG) Mr. Ashraf Qazi co-chaired a roundtable on justice reform on July 13, at the Al-Rasheed Hotel. Some 40 people attended, including representatives from the donor community and a delegation of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The goal of this roundtable was to examine the current needs of the Ministry of Justice and to determine how to best meet them. A special emphasis was given on the current situation of correctional facilities, juvenile justice and on the judicial institute. A constructive discussion emerged between the participants and further exchange between the Ministry, United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the donor community will follow.

First Criminal Case Filed Against Saddam:

- i The first criminal case has been filed against Saddam Hussein in the Iraq Special Tribunal to try war crimes and crimes against humanity. The charges stem from a 1982 massacre of hundreds of Shiite villagers in retaliation for a failed assassination attempt against Saddam. The date for the trial of Saddam and three others will be determined in a few days. If convicted, they could face the death penalty. Judge Juhi, chief judge of the Iraq Special Tribunal, said the preliminary investigation into the July 8, 1982, massacre in Dujail, 50 miles north of Baghdad, has been completed, and the case was referred to the courts for trial.



[5.0] Promoting the Rule of Law ñPublic Integrity and Anti Corruption

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The Next Session Of The Transitional National Assembly Will Be Devoted To Corruption Issues In The Interior And Defense Ministries:

- ï A member of the Integrity Committee, Khalid Al-Atiyah, said the committee is following up on the issues of financial and administrative corruption in all Iraqi ministries. Atiyah said the next session of the National Assembly will be devoted to study issues of corruption in the Defense and Interior Ministries. The committee has information about suspicious contracts, most of which are related to the purchase of military vehicles and airplanes, costing hundreds of millions of dollars.

Barham Saleh: Corruption Is Greatest Threat To Reconstruction:

- ï Iraqi Minister of Planning, Barham Salih, stated during the IRFFI donor conference in Jordan that corruption is threatening reconstruction and international aid.



[6.0] Maintain Int'l Engagement & Support ñ **Developments**

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International Support:

- ï On July 18-19, representatives of more than 60 countries and international organizations, including the United Nations and the World Bank, gathered at the Dead Sea in Jordan to review progress and lessons learned from donor-financed reconstruction activities in Iraq.
- ï On July 11, Denmark committed a further \$5.47 million to United Nations Director General's Iraq Trust Fund, bringing its total contribution to \$10 million and making it eligible to becoming a full member of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI) Donor Committee.
- ï Australia is assisting southern Iraq with \$2.3 million in projects to be coordinated by a working group within the Al Muthanna Task Group (AMTG). Defense Minister Robert Hill said a range of community projects are now underway as part of the Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) program.



[6.0] Maintain Int'l Engagement & Support ñ Contributors to Iraqi Stability Operations

Data as of June 22, 2005

27 Multi-National Forces ñ Iraq (MNF-I) Contributors (in addition to US)

Albania	Denmark	Latvia	Portugal
Armenia	El Salvador	Lithuania	Romania
Australia	Estonia	Macedonia	Slovakia
Azerbaijan	Georgia	Moldova	South Korea
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Italy	Mongolia	Ukraine
Bulgaria	Japan	Norway	UK
Czech Republic	Kazakhstan	Poland	

TOTAL ~ 23,000 Forces

*Note: Fiji participating as a part of the UN mission in Iraq.

28 Countries and NATO
(including US)
Support Iraqi Stability Operations



[7.0] Promote Strategic Communications ñ **Developments**

Strategic Communications:

- ï The Islamic Party of Al Anbar held a meeting that included professors, educated people, clerics, tribal figures and the Muslim Clerics Board in Ramadi. They discussed the security situation and tried to find solutions to the current situation. They also discussed the constitution referendum, the election and how to improve the government. They are planning to hold a large meeting to discuss issues from previous meetings
- ï Al Fourat quotes a source in the Sunni Emergency Conference, held in the Nedaa Al Islam Mosque that clerics are urging all Iraqis, especially Sunnis, to participate in the next election. The source also said that they discussed the recent situation, as a proposal to hold a national reconciliation conference before the next election, and they urged people to register their names. Finally, they asked for the election committee to be neutral in order to have a state governed by law, and not to have a political process without the Sunnis.
- ï The charitable foundation of the Reuters news agency plans to announce this week that it is turning a grass-roots news website into Iraqís first independent commercial news service. The site, Awsat Al-Iraq, will become a full-fledged newswire, managed and staffed by Iraqi journalists in Baghdad and operated independently of Reuters. It will use \$800,000 from the United Nations to create a newsroom and post reporters in each Iraqi province.



[7.0] Promote Strategic Communications ñ **Developments**

Strategic Communications:

- ï On July 13, Public Affairs Officer Bullock met with the Minister of Culture, Mr. Nuni Farhan Al-Rawi, to discuss the transfer to the Iraqi government of cultural property held by the Coalition. As an example, Public Affairs helped transfer \$300,000 of Lladro porcelain from Coalition oversight to the Iraqi Ministry of Culture on July 17. The Minister also discussed the protection of cultural heritage sites and the touring of cultural treasures.
- ï On July 8, two Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Program recipients -- a high school student and university student from Hillah -- departed for the US to begin their respective five-week programs. MEPI, a Presidential initiative, serves to support economic, political, and educational reform efforts in the Middle East and provides an excellent network building opportunity for future regional leaders.
- ï On July 4, more than 80 South-Central Iraqi notables, including National Assembly members, provincial governors, local government officials, tribal and religious leaders, local security personnel, and community activists joined Regional Embassy Office Al Hilah staff and US military representatives to celebrate the 229th anniversary of American independence.



Iraq Weekly Status ñ General Information

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- ï This brief draws from multiple sources. References are cited on the respective pages in the ìNotes Pageî section (View → Notes Page).
- ï Please forward all questions and/or comments to NEA-I-IPOG-DL@state.gov